

# **TOWN OF LUNENBURG MASSACHUSETTS OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER**



**Heather R. Lemieux**  
*Town Manager*

**COVID-19 Update**  
**March 17, 2020**

## **UPDATES FROM THE TOWN MANAGER**

With the exception of the last section of this notice that includes updates from the State, the updates below were provided through a televised public service announcement on March 16, 2020, which can be viewed on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-xuQWcGWfK> and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Lunenburg-Public-Access-Cable-157427270975305/>.

Since the Governor declared a State of Emergency on Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, our response has had to require informed, immediate decisions to take place with an adjusting landscape. On March 12<sup>th</sup>, I called a meeting with James Garreff, our local health agent from Nashoba Associated Boards of Health, the Fire Chief, who is also the Emergency Management Director, the Police Chief and the Superintendent to discuss our risks and our response to the coronavirus. Later that same day I met with all of the department heads to update them and discuss a plan for continuity of operations that would ensure we continue providing essential services and keep our local government functioning. Using information provided by our local health agent, we have updated the public to follow the MA Department of Public Health and Center for Disease Control's guidelines by practicing good hygiene, increasing our sanitizing efforts, both by our cleaning company, and employees sanitizing their workspaces as well. Our Facilities Director was asked to provide additional sanitizer and wipes to all our offices and the cleaning company will be increasing their frequency of cleanings.

On the evening of Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup> the Governor issued an Order that modifies the Open Meeting Law so that all members of public bodies can participate remotely and provide an alternative source of public access. I am currently working closely with the IT Director and Public Access to implement a solution that we can roll out to all boards, committees, commissions and the public.

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On Friday I was in constant contact with the School Superintendent, each of us having conference calls with state and local officials, with my last conference call ending later Friday afternoon. We each drafted public messages that were released simultaneously.

This is a constantly evolving situation that requires us to adjust how we operate. I continue to ask for everyone's patience and understanding during this time, as we are committed to continuing to provide services to our residents and businesses at the same time as keeping our residents and staff safe.

Here are a number of updates specific to Lunenburg, that will also be posted on the town website, town Facebook page, the "townwide" listserv, sent to the Lunenburg Ledger and to Public Access:

Closure of Town Facilities, Schools, Town/School Playgrounds and School Fields :

To follow the Governor's Order of no public gatherings of more than 25 people, we are extending the closure of town facilities to the public until April 7<sup>th</sup> and coincides with school closing dates.

Also, effective immediately, all public, including school, playgrounds in Lunenburg will be closed to public until April 7th. This includes Wallis Park, Kids Kingdom, Marshall Park and school playgrounds. All school fields will also be closed to the public.

Board/Committee/Commission Meetings: On March 12<sup>th</sup> the Governor issued an Emergency Order that suspends and modifies key portions of the Open Meeting Law that allows for remote participation by all members of a board, committee, or commission but we must provide an alternative means of public access so that the public can participate through telephone, internet, streaming, video conferencing or other similar technical means that allows the public a full and fair opportunity to follow the public body's proceedings. The latest order issued last night by the Governor, that there shall be no public gatherings greater than 25 people, has shifted our plans slightly in that the procedure we will now be rolling out will ensure that all participants are participating remotely. In order to adequately prepare staff, members of public bodies, and inform residents how they can participate, all meetings scheduled for the week of March 16<sup>th</sup> have been cancelled. I would also ask that boards and committees only meet to conduct essential business and delay meetings, if possible, to a future date.

Senior Center Updates:

As with other town facilities, the Eagle House will be closed to the public until April 7<sup>th</sup> and this includes all activities at the Senior Center and off-site. The Meals on Wheels program is being extended to all Lunenburg residents age 60 or older who are self-isolating in their homes. Meals will be delivered to your door through MOC Elder Nutrition Services. This will be a temporary delivery until the end of March. Call the Eagle House at (978) 582-4166, Monday- Friday between the hours of 8:30am - 1pm to make arrangements. Meals on Wheels will continue as usual and staff will be in the building to answer phone calls and make appointments.

Van Transportation Service will continue to Lunenburg Crossing only, medical appointments, the pharmacy, and bank. There will be no service for shopping trips to Leominster or Fitchburg, or hairdressing appointments. Any questions can be directed to COA Director Sue Doherty at (978) 582-4166 or [sdoherty@lunenburgonline.com](mailto:sdoherty@lunenburgonline.com)

Curbside Trash and Recycling:

Casella is still on their normal schedule of picking up trash and recycling.

Information on Town Meeting and Town Elections:

We are still operating as if the Annual Town Meeting and Annual Town Election will occur at their normal dates as we are awaiting special legislation from the State that will allow towns more flexibility. The exception to this is that per the Governor's Order on March 15<sup>th</sup> of no public gatherings more than 25 people, the Town Caucus is postponed until further notice. We will continue to operate under all other deadlines until the Governor issues new orders pertaining to town meetings and elections.

Town Caucus: The Town Caucus is cancelled until further notice.

Annual Town Election: Anyone wishing to take out nomination papers for the Annual Town Election should contact the Town Clerk's Office at (978) 582-4130 extensions 130 and 131. The Town Clerk will coordinate the receipt and drop off of papers.

Tax Payments:

Tax payments can be mailed to the town's lockbox at the following address:

Town of Lunenburg  
Department 1260  
P.O. Box 986500  
Boston, MA 02298-6500

For any questions, please contact the Treasurer/Collector Myleen Mallari at (978) 582-4130 x 135 or [mmallari@lunenburgonline.com](mailto:mmallari@lunenburgonline.com).

Communications with Town Departments (Added on 3/17/20):

Although town facilities are closed to the public, staff is still working. If you need to contact a particular department, please visit the town's website at <https://www.lunenburgma.gov/> and each individual department's web page includes contact information, including the phone number and e-mail address.

Devens Regional Household Hazardous Collection Center:

MassDevelopment has postponed the operations for April for the Regional Household Hazardous Products Collection Center. The next Collection day will be May 6<sup>th</sup> and May 9<sup>th</sup> 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. (weather permitting). The Devens HHW website and voicemail are updated. Please make sure you link to the [www.DevensHHW.com](http://www.DevensHHW.com) for the most updated information.

Update from Unitil:

The following steps have been taken by Unitil to share what they are doing to protect the health and safety of their customers, as well as their employees:

- **Disconnections Suspended:** All residential and commercial service disconnections have been suspended indefinitely. Their customer service representatives are standing by to answer questions and can offer a variety of payment solutions if your family or business is experiencing financial hardship as a result of this situation. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you are in need.
- **Online Tools:** They have created an online resource for you regarding the steps they have taken as a Company in response to the virus. You can find that resource at [unitil.com/our-community/covid-](http://unitil.com/our-community/covid-)

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19-response-plan. They also have a number of mobile options through [MyUnitil](#) to help you manage your energy needs.

- **Social Distancing:** They have enacted social distancing practices in all offices. Personnel who can work from home have been advised to do so, and they have limited travel and in-person meetings to the greatest extent possible.
- **Field Health and Safety:** Their field technicians have received additional protective supplies in an effort to keep them safe and healthy. Their customer service team and field technicians will ask you important questions regarding your own health status so they can take appropriate action to ensure the health and safety of all while on your property.
- **Readiness:** They recognize that the spread of COVID 19 doesn't change the fact that we must be ready to respond should a storm or other emergency event impact our system. They are taking steps to ensure field personnel and support staff remain ready to go in the event their response efforts are further tested in this way.
- **Scams:** They are continuing to monitor for individuals or groups that may try to take advantage of the ongoing crises for personal gain. They will share news of any customer scams in progress and keep you abreast of activities to watch out for on their scam page, [unitil.com/beaware](#).

Walmart and Hannafords: The managers at Walmart and Hannafords confirmed on March 16th the hours for both establishments are remaining the same at this point. The Hannaford's manager provided the message that they are working hard to keep the shelves stocked and their maintenance crew is ensuring that their customers and staff remain protected by increasing their sanitizing of the store. Another one of their priorities is to keep their customers and associates informed.

### **UPDATES FROM THE CHIEF OF POLICE:**

The Police Department will take the following steps to reduce Officer/Citizen exposure to the COVID19 while still prioritizing protection of life and property and quality of life:

#### **Reporting Crime:**

- A. Nothing has changed. Citizens are always encouraged to report crime immediately. If you see something say something. Citizens are asked to beware of cyber-crime activity and telephone scams by opportunist taking advantage of a crisis situation for personal gain. We ask that citizens do not give send funds to unconfirmed internet addresses and do not allow telemarketers to bully, intimidate or use other forms of manipulation. Merely hang up the phone and if you feel its necessary call the Police. **For emergencies and crimes in process please call 911. For all other police related services please call the main number, (978) 582-4531.**

#### **Patrol:**

- B. The Police follow standard operating procedures when responding to emergency calls and enforcing all laws including Motor Vehicle violations. Officers will take measures to reduce contact with the public whenever possible. The Police will, at a minimum, respond to all life-saving emergencies, serious crimes in progress or recently occurred crimes, crimes against persons, vehicle collisions involving injuries or fatalities, death investigations, and other responses as staffing levels allow.
- C. The front door will be locked if the desk is not manned. Citizens will be able to access Dispatch via the phone at the front door of the Public Safety Building. Citizens will be let into the lobby of the public safety building if an emergency exists. Otherwise, citizens will be asked to wait by the front door until

an officer arrives to greet them. Arriving officers will let citizens in from the front desk via electric lock and evaluate the complaint from behind the glass.

- D. Telephone reports of minor crimes may be taken by officers. Dispatchers will be asked to obtain caller information, including, but not limited to telephone numbers, and pass that information to on-duty officers. Telephone interviews in these cases are encouraged and response to these crime scenes will be discretionary.
- E. In custody arrests will be processed by a Clerk Magistrate via video arraignment. Arrestees held will be transported to the County Jail by the Worcester County Sheriff's Office until at least Wednesday March 18, 2020 subject to change.

#### Criminal Investigations Section:

- A. The Detective Sergeant and School Resource Officer will be reassigned, if necessary, to supplement patrol needs while maintaining capability to investigate all serious crimes against persons and maintain evidence / crime scene processing as needed for major crimes against persons. Resume investigation of other crimes as staffing levels allow.

#### Assignments

- A. All sworn personnel, regardless of rank are subject to temporary reassignment to mission critical components if the availability of workforce declines.
- B. Work Schedules and shift hours will change to meet needs and maintain operational effectiveness.

#### Mitigation

- A. The Police will keep the law enforcement workplace as disease-free as possible by increasing the cleaning of police facilities and reducing the possibility of having sick or exposed persons contaminating the work area and thus exposing other personnel to COVID19.
- B. The Police Department will increase the cleaning schedule from two days per week to three.
- C. All police vehicles are equipped with medical supplies such as oxygen, bandages, gauze, etc., and personal protection equipment, goggles, gloves, Tyvek suits, N95 masks, as well as hand sanitizer.
- D. Notices will be posted in the lobby encouraging visitors to disclose any symptoms of COVID 19.
- E. Visitors who show signs of the illness or are sick will not be allowed in the public safety building.
- F. If an in custody arrests suspect exhibits flu like symptoms officers will don personal protective gear. Bail arrangements shall be made immediately if release is possible.
- G. Visitors will be encouraged to wash their hands using alcohol based hand sanitizer or soap and water for at least 20 seconds upon entering the building.
- H. Employees will be asked to constantly monitor themselves for signs of illness, and if symptoms exist or the employee is sick then she/he will be required to stay home until the fever has subsided without the use of fever reducers, and symptoms have ceased.

- I. Employees will be asked to wash their hands with soap and water for approximately 20 seconds upon entering the building.
- J. Vehicle Steering wheels, microphones, hand held radar units, door handles, shift levers, phones, desks, computer keyboards and mouses, work tools and equipment will be sanitized at shift change with a disinfectant provided by the department.

#### License to Carry Applications:

The Lunenburg Police Department will continue to process LTC and FID applications. We have implemented a few changes in order to continue our effort to keep our citizens and first responders safe from Covid-19. Please be aware of the following requirements:

- Print and fill out both the application and the mandatory waiver at home PRIOR to your appointment. Please do not come into the lobby to get a copy of the application, both forms are available on the town website here:
  - <https://www.lunenburgma.gov/files-docs/19-03-22/ltcfid-information>
  - In the event that you are unable to print your application at home, please call the station at 978-582-4531 and we will mail you a copy.
- Call 978-582-4531 to schedule an appointment. Please disclose if you have any potential COVID-19 symptoms including, fever, cough, and shortness of breath or if you have traveled at all within the last 14 days.
  - For renewals, appointments will be scheduled closer to expiration dates in order to limit the need for citizens to come into the station during the state of emergency.
  - For new applications, applicants will have the option to apply after April 7<sup>th</sup>. This will be a voluntary optional. The Police Department will always honor your rights under the constitution. Applicants will always have the option of applying for a firearms license at their request. Finger printing is required for a new applicant. Due to the close contact required for fingerprinting applicants will be asked to wear a mask provided by the police department.

The Lunenburg Police Department will Assist the Department of Health or local Board of Health in enforcing the Governor's order pursuant to Chapter 631 of the Acts of 1950, which prohibits gatherings of more than 25 people, without limitation, community, civic, public, leisure, faith-based events, sporting events with spectators,--concerts, conventions, fundraisers, parades, fairs, festivals and any similar event that brings together 25 or more persons in a single room or single space at the same time in a venue such as an auditorium, stadium, arena, large conference room, meeting hall, theatre, gymnasium, fitness center, private club, or any other confined indoor or outdoor space, or the on premises consumption of food or drink at any Restaurant, bar or establishment that offers such until April 5, 2020.

#### **UPDATES FROM THE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT:**

##### **180 Day Requirement**

The Commissioner of Education has informed superintendents that no school district will be in session beyond the 185<sup>th</sup> day on the 2019-2020 school calendar. In Lunenburg that day is June 18<sup>th</sup>. The Governor

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has closed schools until April 7<sup>th</sup>; however, we will continue to monitor this situation and even if the Governor lifts that order locally we may make a different decision based on local or regional conditions.

At this time, unless the Commissioner's guidance changes, we have no plans to cancel April school vacation week.

## **Planning**

The District Leadership Team has been working since Friday afternoon, through the weekend, and again all day today on several plans for implementation during the closure of schools.

### Addressing Concerns of Food Insecurity

In Lunenburg, there are 274 families, a total of 377 students who are eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch.

We will be providing Grab & Go meals for these students. We will be providing lunch and the next day's breakfast daily Monday through Friday in the Grab & Go meals. Our Food services Director, Nadine Lorenzen will be contacting only those families already receiving meal benefits through the school lunch program directly to provide additional information regarding distribution of these Grab & Go meals. We hope to begin distribution Wednesday (3/18) or Thursday (3/19) this week.

Our eligible students have also been receiving Kylie's Kare Kits for Kidz. Kylie's Kare Kits for Kidz is a non-profit group that provides food packages which provide three meals per day for Saturday and Sunday. When school is in session, the Kare Kits are discretely provided to our students through our school nurses' offices. Kare Kits are ready for distribution this Friday (March 20<sup>th</sup>). Currently, the organization believes they can provide Kare Kits for an additional two weeks; however, they are low on stock. If you would like to make a monetary donation or donate food items, you may bring those donations to 66 Watson Ave. in Leominster. Donations can be dropped off beginning March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The food items they are requesting are: boxes of macaroni & cheese, cans of chicken noodle soup, Chef Boyardee products, Spaghetti-Os & meatballs, juice boxes, individual- sized boxes of cereal, single serving oatmeal packets.

### Continuity of Learning

We will be posting enrichment learning resources by grade-level K-8 and by content area grades 9-12. These will be posted on the website and available for families to access beginning Friday morning (3/20). This is not meant to replace daily instruction as per the Commissioner of Education. Rather, these materials are meant to keep students engaged with learning and maintenance of skills. The only exception to this will be for students in Advanced Placement courses. AP teachers will continue to deliver the curriculum so that students will be prepared for the AP exams this spring, assuming that the College Board does not postpone the tests. The College Board has cancelled the May SAT test. These AP assignments will not be graded.



The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is compiling resources for districts to use during the school closure. These resources will be vetted by DESE. Additionally, WGBH is making all curriculum materials accessible to educators at no cost. They will also be dedicating a portion of their broadcast hours to education. This will help students and families who do not have access to the internet to also experience this continuity of learning during the closure.

Starting Monday, Comcast will offer two months of free internet service to new customers, and increase internet speeds for existing customers.

Internet Essentials will be free to new low-income customers. New customers will receive 60 days of complimentary Internet Essentials service, which is normally available to all qualified low-income households for \$9.95/month. Additionally, for all new and existing Internet Essentials customers, the speed of the program's internet service has been increased. That increase will go into effect for no additional fee and it will become the new base speed for the program going forward.

Xfinity WiFi hotspots across the country will be available to anyone who needs them for free. This includes non-Xfinity internet subscribers. For a map of Xfinity WiFi hotspots, visit [www.xfinity.com/wifi](http://www.xfinity.com/wifi). Once at a hotspot, consumers should select the "xfinitywifi" network name in the list of available hotspots and then launch a browser.

Teachers and service providers will be accessible to families and students via email daily, Monday through Friday, during regular school hours. We are also exploring other platforms that teachers can use to engage with their students. We are working on a way that students can access their counselors, school social worker, or school psychologist in a one-on-one format in order to maintain student confidentiality. More details will follow.

The guidance from DESE is that services included in an IEP are suspended while school is closed. We are exploring a platform that will allow us to continue to hold IEP meetings virtually while school is closed. Any meetings scheduled for this week will be rescheduled once we have a platform to host meetings. Additional information for staff and families will be coming from our Director of Student Services, Julianna Hanscom.

#### **Income for Hourly Staff**

We have been exploring ways to ensure that hourly staff will not go without an income. We will be communicating with staff who are impacted regarding what this will look like.

#### **Senior Events**

We have no decisions regarding cancellation of the Senior prom or graduation at this time.

#### **Field Trips**

We have no decisions regarding the Philadelphia field trip in April, the Washington D.C. trip in May, or the Galapagos Islands field trip in June. We will provide information should there be any status change with any or all of the trips.

#### **Facilities**

All school buildings are closed to the public, including all school fields and playgrounds.

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## **Contacting Us**

Only Central Office Administrators are reporting to the office at this time. The best way to reach us is via email.

Dr. Kate Burnham, [kburnham@lunenburgonline.com](mailto:kburnham@lunenburgonline.com)  
Julianna Hanscom, Director of Special Services, [jhanscom@lunenburgonline.com](mailto:jhanscom@lunenburgonline.com) Michael Cassidy,  
Director of Finance & Human Resources, [mcassidy@lunenburgonline.com](mailto:mcassidy@lunenburgonline.com)  
John Londa, Director of facilities & Grounds, [jlonda@lunenburgonline.com](mailto:jlonda@lunenburgonline.com) Steve  
Malandrinos, IT Director, [smalandrinos@lunenburgonline.com](mailto:smalandrinos@lunenburgonline.com)  
Nadine Lorenzen, Director of Food Services, [nlorenzen@lunenburgonline.com](mailto:nlorenzen@lunenburgonline.com)

## **Communications**

We will continue to push information out to staff, students, and families via email and automated calls. All communications that are pushed out will also be posted on our district website at <https://www.lunenburgschools.net/>.

This is a very fluid and at times rapidly changing situation with directives coming from the federal and state levels. We will do our best to get you any new information as to how we are operating and supporting continuity of learning while our schools are closed as quickly as we can.

We appreciate your patience as we navigate uncharted territory and make decisions based on the information we have available at that time.

Please practice social distancing and stay well.

## **UPDATES RECEIVED FROM THE STATE:**

The Baker-Polito Administration continues to take steps to limit the spread of COVID-19 in Massachusetts. A comprehensive list of emergency orders and guidance is available [here](#).

### **School Closures:**

Governor Baker has ordered a 3-week suspension of school operations for educational purposes at all public and private elementary and secondary (K-12) schools in the Commonwealth (not including residential and day schools for special needs students), beginning Tuesday, March 17 and continuing until Monday, April 6.

### **Gatherings and Restaurants:**

Governor Baker has issued an emergency order limiting gatherings to 25 individuals and prohibiting on-premises consumption of food or drink at bars and restaurants, beginning Tuesday, March 17 and effective until Monday, April 6. [Full text of the order](#).

### **State Office Closures:**

Governor Baker directed that all non-emergency Executive Branch employees should not report to their workplace today or Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>. During this period, the administration will work to expand alternative work arrangements for the executive branch workforce and further develop plans to continue to provide essential state government services.

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#### Trial Court Closures:

Court leaders have closed the Trial Courts to for today and tomorrow, Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>. Additional information is available [here](#).

#### Health Care:

MDPH has issued the following guidance:

- All commercial insurers, self-insured plans, and the Group Insurance Commission are required to cover medically necessary telehealth services related to COVID-19 testing and treatment. Insurers must do this without requiring cost-sharing of any kind – such as co-pays and coinsurance – for testing and treatment. [Full text of the order](#).
- All assisted living residences are to restrict visitors to protect the health of residents and staff. [Full text of the order](#).
- All hospitals are to restrict visitors. [Full text of the order](#).
- Hospitals must cancel non-essential elective procedures. [Full text of the order](#).
- Licensed pharmacies may compound and sell hand sanitizer over the counter. [Full text of the order](#).
- The Board of Registration in Nursing has updated its policies to expedite the processing of reciprocal license applications for nurses licensed in another jurisdiction to allow those applications to be processed in one business day. [Full text of the policy](#).

#### Utility Shutoff Moratorium:

The Department of Public Utilities has implemented a moratorium on gas/electric utility shutoffs until further notice. More information is available [here](#).

#### Registry of Motor Vehicles:

The Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) will extend the renewal timeline of certain credentials to reduce the need for customers to physically visit an RMV service center for in-person transactions. [Full text of the order](#).

#### Unemployment Assistance:

The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) and the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA), in coordination with the US Department of Labor (USDOL), are taking a series of actions to assist workers and employers.

For current unemployment claims:

- All requirements regarding attending seminars at the MassHire career centers have been suspended.
- Missing deadlines due to effects of COVID-19 will be excused under DUA's good cause provision.
- All appeal hearings will be held by telephone only.

The DOL issued guidance to the states instructing state agencies to apply existing law flexibly. Under the DOL guidance, DUA may now pay unemployment benefits if a worker is quarantined due to an order by a civil authority or medical professional or leaves employment due to reasonable risk of exposure or infection or to care for a family member and does not intend to or is not allowed to return to work. The worker need not provide medical documentation and need only be available for work when and as able.

To assist individuals who cannot work due to the impact of COVID-19, the administration is filing emergency legislation that will allow new claims to be paid more quickly by waiving the one week waiting period for unemployment benefits.

EOLWD and DUA are also filing emergency regulations that will allow people impacted by COVID-19 to collect unemployment if their workplace is shut down and expects to reopen in four or fewer weeks. The following conditions apply:

- Workers must remain in contact with their employer during the shutdown.
- Workers must be available for any work their employer may have for them that they are able to do.
- An employer may request to extend the period of the covered shut-down to eight weeks, and workers will remain eligible for the longer period under the same conditions described above.
- If necessary, DUA may extend these time periods for workers and employers.

Employers who are impacted by COVID-19 may request up to a 60-day grace period to file quarterly reports and pay contributions.

Pending federal legislation proposes further relief including additional money for unemployment benefits, and relief to employers for charges related to unemployment benefits paid due to COVID-19.

#### Municipal Governance:

Governor Baker proposed a package of legislation to help address challenges to municipal governance resulting from the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, including potential delays in holding Town Meetings and adopting Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) municipal budgets. Provisions include:

- Amend existing statute authorizing Moderators to postpone Town Meetings by thirty days. State statute currently permits postponement for “public safety emergency,” and the legislation would add “public health emergency” as a second reason for postponement.
- Permit local Select Boards to postpone Town Meetings beyond the statutory June 30 deadline when the Governor has declared a state of emergency and conditions prevent the completion of a Town Meeting.
- Permit local Select Boards to temporarily adopt lower quorum rules. This would be an opt-in provision to allow a town-by-town determination, and it would enable Select Boards to designate the quorum level. Numerous towns have existing low quorum provisions in their by-laws.
- Permit continued month-to-month spending into FY21 by towns based on the prior fiscal year budget with approval of the Division of Local Services during states of emergency. The month-to-month authorization would continue so long as a state of emergency prevents the adoption of a budget. Cities have similar authority under existing state law.
- Permit towns to access their free cash balance for FY21 spending with approval of the Division of Local Services. This would be based on the July 2019 certified balance and could continue until an FY21 budget is adopted.
- Permit municipal spending from revolving funds at the level set by their Fiscal Year 2020 appropriation until an FY21 budget is adopted.
- Authorize a three-year amortization period for deficit spending incurred as a result of COVID-19 crisis. The default rule would require an FY21 tax rate to provide for one-year amortization and this change would follow the 2015 precedent for snow removal costs.

#### “No Sail” Order for Cruise Ship Operations:

The CDC has issued a 30 day 'No Sail' order for any cruise ship which has not voluntarily suspended operations. The Coast Guard will assist the CDC in preventing cruise ships from embarking passengers in US ports. The Port of Boston does not currently have any cruise ship arrivals scheduled until April 17<sup>th</sup>, though will identify any cruise ships or vessels carrying 250 or more persons (passengers and crew) with an overnight itinerary, planning to embark passengers.

#### MBTA Reduced Schedule:

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Starting Tuesday, March 17, trains and buses will run with reduced service to slow the spread of COVID-19. In addition, the MBTA has increased cleaning and sanitation at stations and on vehicles. Additional information is available at <https://www.mbtta.com/covid19>

#### Disaster/Emergency Recovery Actions:

- MEMA and the Baker-Polito Administration are working closely with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to activate the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program which would provide assistance to eligible businesses and non-profits impacted by COVID-19.

#### Stay Informed

In an effort to ensure you have good situational awareness and early guidance from DPH, all stakeholders and the general public are encouraged to visit the DPH website as updates and guidance changes frequently. The link for DPH website can be found here: [www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus](http://www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus).

Additionally, Massachusetts residents can call Mass 2-1-1 to learn more about:

- COVID-19 prevention, symptoms, and treatment
- Information about testing
- Guidance for people planning or returning from travel

Massachusetts 2-1-1 is open to callers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Operators fluent in Spanish are available, and more than 150 other languages are supported through an interpreter services line. Residents with questions can dial 2-1-1 from any landline or cellphone, or use the live chat option on the [Mass 2-1-1 website](#).

#### Planning Guidance

Below are hyperlinks from DPH's website that provide specific guidance and recommendations for: (1) emergency responders and law enforcement, (2) businesses and employers, (3) elementary and secondary schools, and (4) colleges and universities. To access the hyperlinks hold "Ctrl" and click the link.

- Guidance for [emergency responders and law enforcement click here](#).
- Guidance for [businesses and employers click here](#).
- Guidance for [elementary and secondary schools click here](#).
- Guidance for [colleges and universities click here](#)